



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Contact: Priyanka Sinha
Office: 404-727-4291 | Cell: 404-822-5019 | priyanka.sinha@emory.edu

Doorway to an Enlightened World:
The Tibetan Shrine from the Alice S. Kandell Collection
March 19—November 27, 2016

ATLANTA, GA (January 13, 2015)— In *Doorway to an Enlightened World: The Tibetan Shrine from the Alice S. Kandell Collection*, on view from March 19 through November 27, 2016, visitors to the Carlos Museum will encounter 124 compelling works of Tibetan Buddhist art, displayed not as individual, unconnected pieces but presented in a more traditional sacred context, a shrine, regarded as a “doorway” into a higher world. The Kandell Shrine, with objects created in artistic centers across the Tibetan Plateau as well as in China and Mongolia between the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, is considered the only one of such magnitude and artistic quality in the United States.

A child psychologist and photographer, Alice S. Kandell fell in love with Himalayan art and culture as a college student. Over the next four decades, she would visit the regions of Tibet, Sikkim, and Ladakh, repeatedly, learning about the people and their traditions, and returning home with exquisite works of art from bronze sculptures, thangkas, and textile banners to painted furniture, ritual implements, and more.

After acquiring the substantial holdings of Philip Rudko, a collector of Tibetan and Mongolian art for more than fifty years, Kandell organized the objects in her New York apartment to closely resemble the Tibetan shrines she experienced on her travels. In 2011, she donated her collection to the Smithsonian’s Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, with the stipulation that the objects should be exhibited together in the form of a shrine.

Among the most impressive objects in the collection are large, gilt-bronze Buddhas and bodhisattvas; a Mongolian silver Buddha with seashell and coral adornments; a gilded bronze statue of the goddess Tara with a gem-encrusted crown and jewelry; ornate offering bowls and other ritual implements; and superb thangkas (scroll paintings) depicting enlightened beings, framed within their original silk brocade complete with the original finials. Shrine rooms are considered sacred spaces by practicing Buddhists, and shrines like this one can be found in monasteries as well as in private homes. Monks and lamas have used the Kandell Shrine for contemplation and meditation and the Dalai Lama has blessed many of the objects within it.

To place the Shrine in its cultural context, the Carlos Museum is planning a wealth of educational events. Respected scholars, brought to Atlanta for lectures on Tibetan art, religion, and culture, will include Robert Linrothe, associate professor in the Department of Art History, Northwestern University, and Katherine Anne Paul, curator of the arts of Asia at the Newark Museum. Emory professors Sara McClintock, Ellen Gough, and Tara Doyle from the Department of Religion, will also lecture in conjunction with the exhibition.

The Carlos Museum will sponsor a lively series of book-related programs including *Artful Stories*, a literary and art program for young children, a discussion for teenagers on Tenzin Wangmo’s *The Prince and the Zombie*, and *Carlos Reads*, a book club for adults led by distinguished Emory faculty. Book selections for Carlos Reads include Tenzin Chögyel’s *The Life of the Buddha* and *The Life of Milarepa*, Tsangnyön Heruka’s biography of the beloved Tibetan saint.

Alice S. Kandell will share her story of building the collection through years of travel and study in an event with Joyce Flueckiger, Emory professor of the anthropology of religion and Director of the Emory-Tibet Partnership, Geshe Lobsang Tenzin Negi. In addition, Lobsang, also the founder and director of Drepung Loseling Monastery in Atlanta, will lead a four-week Buddhist meditation class in the galleries. In March, the exhibition will serve as the centerpiece of the 12th annual Tibet Week, which features lectures, films, panel discussions, the creation of a sand mandala, and demonstrations of the type of traditional Tibetan woodcarving found within the shrine.

While Tibetan art has become increasingly familiar to the public, it is rare to see it displayed in a manner that evokes its traditional use and setting. “Maintaining a personal shrine and place daily offerings upon it is one of the most basic of all Tibetan Buddhist practices,” explains Emory professor Sara McClintock. “The deities on the altar symbolize both the many beings who have attained enlightenment, who are worthy of homage, and the ultimate state of enlightenment to which the practitioner aspires. Making offerings, including water, incense, light, prostrations, and prayers, to such exalted beings is thought to generate enormous merit that can aid the practitioner in his or her own journey toward Buddhahood. Viewing Tibetan art objects arranged in a shrine is a fundamentally different experience from seeing each

object individually. With the shrine, the viewer has the opportunity to imagine what it might be like to be a practicing Buddhist in the Himalayas.”

The exhibition has been organized by The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. The exhibition in Atlanta has been made possible through generous support from the Thalia N. Carlos and Chris M. Carlos Foundation, Inc.; the Thalia and Michael C. Carlos Foundation, Inc.; the E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation; the Highland Vineyard Foundation; Veneralia 2016 Donors; and Christine Tryba-Cofrin and David H. Cofrin. Special thanks to Dr. Sara McClintock and Emory’s Department of Religion, the Emory-Tibet Partnership, and the Drepung Loseling Monastery.



Kanakamuni Buddha

18th Century

Lhasa or Shigatse, Central, Tibet

Gilt copper alloy, partly cast and partly repoussé; traces of pigment, inserted blue turquoise urna; base sealed with copper plate incised with a double vajra; unopened with contents inside

Photo courtesy of The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Smithsonian Institution. From the Alice S. Kandell Collection.

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About the Michael C. Carlos Museum

The Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets art and artifacts from antiquity to the present in order to provide unique opportunities for education and enrichment in the community, and to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research at Emory University. The Carlos Museum is one of the Southeast's premier museums with collections of art from Greece, Rome, Egypt, Near East, Nubia, the Americas, Africa, and Asia, as well as a collection of works on paper from the Renaissance to the present. For location and admission information, visit carlos.emory.edu/visit/hours-admission.

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